Kenya, IPC Acute food insecurity situation, August–October 2019

Map 30

FACTORs DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

Weather extremes
The March–April ‘long rains’ were generally very poor. In south-eastern and coastal marginal agriculture livelihood zones maize production was an estimated 50–60 percent below average, with near failure of the harvest reported in several south-eastern areas (FAO-GIEWS, September 2019). However, in the Rift Valley and Western provinces improved rains from May resulted in average maize production (FAO-GIEWS, December 2019). Drought conditions in March and April in northern pastoral areas and prevailing moisture deficits resulted in poor livestock conditions and limited milk production, atypical migration patterns and competition over natural resources (FAO-GIEWS, June 2019).

Exceptionally abundant October–December ‘short-rains’ benefitted yields and induced farmers to increase areas planted, resulting in an estimated above-average cereal production (FAO-GIEWS, March 2020). These rains regenerated pasture and rangelands and improved livestock body conditions, allowing many to recover from the 2018/2019 drought (FEWS NET, June 2019).

However, these rains also caused devastating flash floods and landslides disrupted livelihoods, destroyed crops and swept away livestock, irrigation systems, roads, houses, health clinics and sanitation services, mainly in north-eastern, central and coastal regions. Up to 160 000 people in 31 counties were affected and 18 000 displaced (OCHA, November 2019).

Conflict/insecurity
Deteriorated forage and water resources during the first half of 2019 led to atypical livestock migration resulting in increased resource-based conflicts over grazing rights and access to water resources in Meru North, Kitui, Samburu, Turkana, West Pokot, Marsabit, Tana River, Garissa, Isiolo and Nyeri counties. This subsided with the October–December rains when livestock returned to their traditional grazing lands (FEWS NET, August 2019). Periodic cattle rustling led to increased tensions, loss of livestock and limited access to markets. Sporadic terrorist attacks against civilians and state security forces by Al Shabaab affected trade and commodity movements in counties bordering Somalia (RoK, 2019).

Economic shocks
Maize prices, mostly stable at low levels in the first quarter of 2019, surged by 60–85 percent from March–June in markets located in main urban centres and in western key growing areas, as seasonal patterns were compounded by concerns over the impact of the severe dry conditions on ‘long rains’ crops. Subsequently, prices declined by about 30 percent from August–December, as local harvests increased supplies. However, prices in December remained 40–70 percent